(ख) राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग सं. 7 पर नर्मदा पर एक ऊंचे पुल सहित 5.4 कि. मी. लम्बे जबलपुर "बाईपास" का एक हिस्सा निर्माणाधीन है। 1991-92 के दौरान इस कार्य के लिए बजट प्रावधान की प्रस्तावित राशि 33.35 लाख रु. है।

Conversion of State Highways into National Highways in Tamil Nadu

250. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any request from the Tamil Nadu Government to convert:

(i) Madurai-Tenkasi State Highways;

(ii) Trinulveli-Kollam State Highway into the National Highways; and

(b) if so, what is the action taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A decision in this regard can be taken only after finalisation of the 8th Five Year Plan, having regard to different factors, such as the criteria prescribed for new National Highways, recommendations made by the National Transport Policy Committee, *inter-se* priority of various proposals, availability of funds etc.

Indo-China Relations

251. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN:

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what steps are being taken by Government to maintain cordial relationship with China and what is the response of the Chinese Government;

(b) what steps are being taken to settle the border dispute between India and China;

(c) whether there is any pending invitation from the Chinese Government to either the Prime Minister or the Foreign Minister to visit China and whether there is any pending invitation from India to the Chinese Head of State or Foreign Minister to visit India;

(d) what are the ultimate results of the meetings of official spokesman of two countries which were held in the recent past to discuss the border dispute and other allied topics;

(e) whether Government is aware of the provocative innuendos about alleged Indian expansionism and hegemonism presented in a paper, at a Seminar in Colombo recently by an Associate Professor of Beijing University; and

(f) whether any clarification was sought on this paper from the authorities in Beijijng or from the Ambassador of China in Delhi to ascertain whether it is the thinking of the individual or thinking of the Chinese Government?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Since the visit of the then Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi to China in 1988, there has been a marked improvement in India-China relations. The high level political dialogue with China on matters of mutual concern has gathered momentum. The scale of scientific, technical and cultural exchanges has been steadily expanded. Agreement has been reached in principle on reopening Consulates General in Shanghai and Bombay and also to resume border trade.

The Chinese Government has expressed its satisfaction with the improvement of India-China relations, and has expressed confidence that these relations will further improve and develop.